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ABSTRACT

The relationship between student counselors' level of confrontation and personality variables, as measured by the California Psychological Inventory (CPI), was studied. The subjects were 20 graduate students enrolled in two sections of a Counseling Practicum class. Level of confrontation was measured from audio-tape ratings made by the student counselors in counseling sessions. Personality variable were taken from the student counselors' scores on 18 scales of the CPI. Spearman's rank correlation method was employed to test for agreement between level of confrontation and each of the personality variables. The t test was utilized as the statistical procedure to test the significance of the rank correlation, and the .05 level of confidence was used. The findings revealed that three personality variables related significantly with the level of confrontation. The three personality variables were Capacity for Status, Sense of Well-Being, and Achievement via Conformance. The remaining 15 personality variables were found not to relate significantly to the level of confrontation. (Author/DB)

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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNSELOR CONFRONTATION AND SELECTED PERSONALITY VARIABLES

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Research in Counseling and Psychotherapy is concerned with one central question: "What are the essential elements in the psychotherapeutic process that lead to constructive behavioral change?" (Truax & Carkhuff, 1964) Some questions related to this central question could be:

How can one identify the essential elements?

What are the characteristics of counselors or counselor trainees who would be most likely to incorporate these essential elements in their counseling?

How can one measure these essential elements?

How can one evaluate the effectiveness of the essential elements to success in therapy?

How can one incorporate the answers to these questions into a counselor education program?

This study will examine some of these questions in regard to one specific therapist behavior--confrontation.

Recent research has examined the effective counselor in terms of the facilitative conditions and has found that the counselor being identified as high in these conditions had a definite tendency to use confrontation in the counseling session (Berenson et al., Jan. 1968; March, 1968). Confrontation has proven to create more clear self exploration, (Berenson et al., March, 1968) and according to Truax and Carkhuff (1963) research in self exploration, ". . . patients who explored 'self' to a greater degree throughout the course of psychotherapy also showed the greatest construc-

tive personality change. . ."

A review of the available literature yielded four studies of confrontation. (Anderson, Sept. 1968; Berenson and Mitchell, July, 1968; Berenson, et al., Jan., 1968; Berenson et al., March, 1968). Each of the researchers, in part, correlated confrontation with counselor functioning level. The functioning level was determined by the average rating across five scales of the facilitative dimensions. The facilitative dimensions have been examined closely as essential elements in the effective counseling session since 1963 (Truax and Carkhuff, 1968). There are four basic elements common to all four studies. They are empathy, positive regard, genuineness, and concreteness. A review of these dimensions and other topics related to counseling and therapy can be found in two books by Berenson and Carkhuff (Berenson and Carkhuff, 1965; Carkhuff and Berenson, 1968).

In 1968 John Douds, in collaboration with Carkhuff and Berenson, wrote a chapter on the research, nature, and process of confrontation for a book entitled Beyond Counseling and Therapy (Carkhuff and Berenson, 1968). Douds explains the results of therapist-initiated confrontation and emphasizes the responsibility of the therapist to engage in meaningful confrontations. In a summary of his chapter about confrontation research Douds has written:

> Facilitative conditions, techniques, and insight per se are not enough for effective therapy. Ultimately, the client needs not only to understand but to resolve the discrepancies between his ideal and real self, insight and action, and illusion and reality, if he is to achieve emotional integration.
> . . . the therapist who serves as an authentic model of confrontation offers the client a meaningful example of living." (Carkhuff and Berenson, 1968).

In summary, the researcher noted that of the studies reporting numbers of "high-functioning" and "low-functioning" therapists it seems significant that the proportion of "high" to "low" was less than one-third (Berenson and Mitchell, July, 1968). The researcher also noted the use of "trained therapists" as raters (Berenson, et al. March, 1968; Berenson and Mitchell, July, 1968; Anderson, September, 1968). The question is raised because of Truax's findings that less experienced persons provide more objective tape ratings (Truax and Carkhuff, 1967).

The hypothesis in this study was that there will be no significant relationship between any of the eighteen personality variables as measured by the California Psychological Inventory and student counselor level of confrontation.

Procedures

In reviewing the available methods of research the correlation method was selected.

One female and three male raters were chosen as confrontation raters for this study. They were selected from the students graduated from Tennessee Technological University in 1969 with a Master of Arts Degree in Guidance and Counseling.

The researcher trained the raters by first giving them a written definition and examples of confrontation using Susan C. Anderson (September, 1968) and Bernard G. Berenson (January, 1968) as authorities. The definition taken from an article by Anderson was used as the basic definition: ". . . confrontation is defined as an act by which the therapist points

out to the client a discrepancy between his own and the client's way of viewing reality. . . (Anderson, September, 1968) himself or his situation in a way that is clearly discrepant with the way the therapist views the same situation." (Anderson, September 1968).

Example of confrontation directed toward the real and ideal self:

Client: "I'm a cool guy. I really think I'm great. . . You can tell by the way I dress and tal. . . I'm just cool."

Therapist: "You speak of yourself as being a pretty good guy, but I guess you don't believe it or you wouldn't say it so loud and so often." (Anderson, 1968)

Example of confrontation directed toward a discrepancy between client insight and action:

Client: "Now that I see what my father has done to me all these years, I feel like a new man."

Therapist: "Yes, but you're still getting up at 6 a.m. to cater to his requests just like you always did." (Anderson, 1968).

The raters were also given the five types of confrontations taken from a study by Berenson:

(1) Experiential - "The therapist's specific responses to any discrepancy between patient and therapist's experiencing of the patient, or to any discrepancy between patient statement about himself and patient's inner experience of himself, or to any discrepancy between patient and therapist's experience of the therapist. . ."

(2) Didactic - "The therapist's direct clarification of the patient's misinformation or lack of information. . ."

(3) Strength - ". . . experiential confrontation which focused on resources. . ."

(4) Weakness - ". . . experiential confrontation which focused on liabilities. . ."

(5) Encouragement to action - "Encouragement to action involved the therapist pressing the patient to act on his world in some constructive manner and discouraging a passive stance toward life." (Berenson, et al., January, 1968).

After the raters had time to read and study the definitions and examples, they were given sample tapes and asked to independently count the number of confrontations they recognized and to note the confrontations by footage number indicated on the recorder. The notations were used by the researcher to check for accuracy of identification. Perfect agreement between the raters' identifications and the researcher's identifications was obtained before the raters were given the subject tapes. Two of the raters were given subject tapes from the Spring Quarter session of Counseling Practicum, and the other two raters were given subject tapes from the Summer Quarter session of Counseling Practicum.

Recordings of twenty student counselor's counseling sessions were obtained as subject tapes. The twenty tapes were selected from the recorded sessions which ranged from the counselor's third session to the eighth session irrespective of the number of client sessions. The criteria for selecting one of the five tapes from each counselor was that it be at least forty-five minutes in duration and not exceeding sixty minutes in duration. Each rater was asked to rate each tape in the same manner as the ratings of the sample tapes. The counselor's level of confrontation consisted of an actual count of the number of times he confronted the client in the recorded counseling session. A confrontation was not tallied unless complete agreement was obtained from both raters' tally sheets.

Each student counselor was ranked according to his level of confrontation. The raters had no knowledge of the identity of the counselors or clients in this study.

The student counselor's scores on the California Psychological Inventory were obtained from the profile sheets which means they were in standard score form. A comparison of the significant relationship between the scores and level of confrontation was made employing the rank difference statistical method (Siegel, 1956).

The CPI scales are grouped into four categories with a total of eighteen scales. "Each scale is intended to cover one important facet of interpersonal psychology, and the total set of 18 is intended to provide a comprehensive survey of an individual from this social interaction point of view." (Gough, 1964).

The following is a list of the scales by categories:

Class I. Measures of Poise, Ascendency, and Self-Assurance

1. Dominance
2. Capacity for Status
3. Sociability
4. Social Presence
5. Self-Acceptance
6. Sense of Well-Being

Class II. Measures of Socialization, Maturity, and Responsibility

7. Responsibility
8. Socialization
9. Self-Control
10. Tolerance
11. Good Impression
12. Communality

Class III. Measures of Achievement Potential and Intellectual Efficiency

13. Achievement via Conformance
14. Achievement via Independence
15. Intellectual Efficiency

Class IV. Measures of Intellectual and Interest Modes

16. Psychological-Mindedness

17. Flexibility

18. Femininity

Results and Discussion

The Spearman rank correlation was the statistical technique employed to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the student counselor's level of confrontation and any of the personality variables on the CPI. The Spearman rank correlation (r_s) is perhaps the best statistic based on ranks according to Siegel (1956). "The efficiency of the Spearman rank correlation when compared with the most powerful parametric correlation, the Pearson r, is about 91 percent." (Siegel, 1956)

The Spearman rank yields a value of agreement between two variables. In order to test the significance of the agreement Kendal's tau (designated as Student's t) may be utilized. "When N is 10 or larger, the significance of an obtained r_s under the null hypothesis may be tested by . . . (t)." (Siegel, 1956).

Personality Variables

The student counselor's standard scores on the CPI were obtained and statistically treated to obtain a mean and standard deviation for each variable. These means and standard deviations expressed in standard score form are contained in Table 1.

Two scales had mean scores that fell outside the middle range of standard scores of forty to sixty. These two scales were Dominance ($\bar{X}$ = 61.1) and Self-Acceptance ($\bar{X}$ = 63.2). The range of standard deviations for the eighteen scales was 6.5 - 12.14.

In the Manual for the CPI Gough says: "If nearly all scores are above the mean standard score line, the probabilities are that the person is one who is functioning effectively both socially and intellectually." (Gough, 1964). Four of the eighteen scales fell below the general base-line of 50. These were: Socialization ($\bar{X}$ = 47.15), Self-Control (46.75), Good Impression (49.85) and Femininity (45.60).

Table 1

Personality Variables: Means and Standard Deviations of the California Psychological Inventory for Student Counselors Expressed in Standard Score Form

Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation
Dominance	61.10	9.04
Capacity for Status	58.00	6.87
Sociability	59.35	6.48
Social Presence	59.95	10.85
Self Acceptance	63.15	8.71
Sense of Well-Being	53.45	8.92
Responsibility	50.30	9.15
Socialization	47.15	12.14
Self Control	46.75	10.57
Tolerance	53.65	8.13
Good Impression	49.85	10.64
Communality	50.75	11.03
Achievement via Conformance	55.85	10.57
Achievement via Independence	57.85	8.43
Intellectual Efficiency	53.75	7.99
Psychological Mindedness	59.20	7.29
Flexibility	56.00	11.81
Femininity	45.60	8.27

Correlates of Confrontation

Each student counselor was ranked according to the number of confrontations counted on his tape. This ranking was statistically compared with his ranking on each of the personality variables on the CPI. Three CPI variables were found to have a significant relationship with the student counselor's level of confrontation. These variables were the Capacity for Status (Cs), Sense of Well-Being (Wb) and Achievement via Conformance (Ac) scales. The correlates of confrontation with r_s and t values are contained in Table II.

The Cs scale had the highest positive relationship with an r_s value of .434 which was significant at the .05 level of confidence with a t value of 2.045. According to Gough in the Manual for the California Psychological Inventory the Cs scale is designed "to serve as an index of an individual's capacity for status (not his actual or achieved status). The scale attempts to measure the personal qualities and attributes which underlie and lead to status." (Gough, 1964).

> A person scoring high on the Cs scale tends to be seen as:
>
> Ambitious, active, forceful, insightful, resourceful, and versatile; as being ascendant and self-seeking; effective in communication; and as having personal scope and breadth of interests.
>
> Low scorers tend to be seen as:
>
> Apathetic, shy, conventional, dull, mild, simple, and slow; as being stereotyped in thinking; restricted in outlook and interests; and as being uneasy and awkward in new or unfamiliar social situations. (Gough, 1964).

The Sense of Well-Being (Wb) scale was found to relate significantly with an r_s value of .424 and a t value of 1.99 which was significant at the .05 level of confidence. The Wb scale was designed "to identify persons who minimize their worries and complaints, and who are relatively free from self-doubt and disillusionment." (Gough, 1964).

Table II

Correlates of Confrontation: Rank Correlation Coefficients and *t* Values of the Student Counselor's Level of Confrontation and Each of the Variables on the California Psychological Inventory

Scale	Correlation Coefficient	*t* Value
Dominance	0.277	1.223
Capacity for Status	0.434	2.045*
Sociability	-0.105	-0.448
Social Presence	0.253	1.114
Self-Acceptance	-0.138	-0.590
Sense of Well-Being	0.424	1.988*
Responsibility	-0.033	-0.139
Socialization	-0.306	-1.365
Self Control	-0.110	-0.471
Tolerance	-0.065	-0.277
Good Impression	0.011	0.047
Communality	-0.212	-0.918
Achievement via Conformance	-0.405	-1.877*
Achievement via Independence	-0.047	-0.201
Intellectual Efficiency	0.038	0.162
Psychological Mindedness	0.211	0.920
Flexibility	0.350	1.588
Femininity	-0.336	-1.512

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Persons scoring high on the Wb scale tend to be seen as:

Energetic, enterprising, alert, ambitious and versatile; as being productive and active; and as valuing work and effort for its own sake.

Low scorers tend to be seen as:

Unambitious, leisurely, awkward, cautious, apathetic, and conventional; as being self-defensive and apologetic; and as constricted in thought and action. (Gough, 1964).

The Achievement via Conformance (Ac) scale was negatively related to the level of confrontation. The Ac scale has an r_s value of -.404 with a t value of -1.88 significant at the .05 level of confidence. The Ac scale was designed "to identify those factors of interest and motivation which facilitate achievement in any setting where conformance is a positive behavior." (Gough, 1964)

The high scorer on this scale tends to be seen as:

Capable, co-operative, efficient, organized, responsible, stable, and sincere; as being persistent and industrious; and as valuing intellectual activity and intellectual achievement.

Low scorers tend to be seen as:

Coarse, stubborn, aloof, awkward, insecure, and opinionated; as easily disorganized under stress or pressures to conform; and as pessimistic about their occupational futures. (Gough, 1964).

These relationships which were significant at the .05 level of confidence, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis with regard to Capacity for Status, Sense of Well-Being, and Achievement via Conformance scales on the CPI.

The data did not yield significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis for any of the following fifteen scales: Dominance, Sociability, Social Presence, Self-Acceptance, Responsibility, Socialization, Self-Contro

Tolerance, Good Impression, Communality, Achievement via Independence, Intellectual Efficiency, Psychological-Mindedness, Flexibility and Femininity.

Recommendations, based on the findings of this study, included the following: 1) a more intense program of research into the development of an instrument that would provide the counselor educator with some means for describing the potentially effective counselor; 2) that future studies in confrontation employ sample tapes not earlier than the client's third successive interview; 3) that future studies of confrontation should be done correlating experience in counseling with level of counselor confrontation; and 4) that future research should be done to clarify the scale descriptions for high and low scorers on the California Psychological Inventory.

Summary

It was the purpose of this study to investigate the relationship between student counselors' level of confrontation and personality variables as measured by the California Psychological Inventory.

The subjects were twenty graduate students in the counseling education program at Tennessee Technological University enrolled in two sections of a Counseling Practicum class during the Spring and Summer Quarters, 1969.

Level of confrontation was measured from audio-tape ratings made by the student counselors in counseling sessions during the particular quarter they were enrolled in Counseling Practicum. Personality variables were taken from the student counselors' scores on eighteen scales on the California Psychological Inventory. Spearman's rank correlation method was

employed to test for agreement between level of confrontation and each of the personality variables. The t test was utilized as the statistical procedure to test the significance of the rank correlation and the .05 level of confidence was used.

The findings revealed three personality variables related significantly with the level of confrontation. The three personality variables were: Capacity for Status, Sense of Well-Being, and Achievement via Conformance. The remaining fifteen personality variables were found not to relate significantly to the level of confrontation.

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